FROM THE CITY OF VANCOUVER • DECEMBER 2007

CITYNEWS

YOUR CITY, YOUR TAXES, YOUR PRIORITIES

In February 2008, City Council will seek your input on two important issues: how much the City should spend on its operating budget, and how property taxes that pay for it should be raised.

2008 BUDGET

DID YOU KNOW that of all the tax money collected by governments in Canada, municipalities only receive eight cents of every dollar? This is collected mostly from property taxes, and must cover the cost of the wide range of public services municipalities provide to their residents.

Each year, City Council is faced with the challenge of balancing the budget given a limited source of revenues, increasing service demands, and inflationary pressures. Spending more in one area means spending less elsewhere or increasing property taxes. So, deciding on service priorities is essential.

To determine an acceptable balance, and to use your tax money in the best way possible, Council needs your input: How much should the City spend? What issues are important to you? What services should be enhanced or reduced? Where should we look for savings?

IT'S YOUR MONEY – HAVE YOUR SAY

City Council is committed to listening to your views on these important issues. You can take part in several ways. You may be asked to participate in a public opinion poll. You may attend a public meeting to hear the issues and express your views. You will also be able to submit comments by e-mail, mail or fax. The City will publish "City Choices", a flyer that outlines the issues, new funding requests, potential reductions, and the recommended tax shift.

The flyer will be distributed through local newspapers, community centres, public libraries, and Business Improvement Associations.

It will also be available by February 6, 2008 on the City's website where you may fill out an online questionnaire.

Dates, times and locations of the public meetings in February will be announced in your local newspapers and on the City's website. For details and updates, please visit our website at: vancouver.ca.

PROPERTY TAX POLICY

IN 2006, COUNCIL appointed three experts to the Property Tax Policy Review Commission. They looked at two issues: how property taxes are divided between residential and commercial taxpayers, and how to better manage year-over-year tax changes on individual properties.

The Commission recommended that commercial taxpayers should pay a smaller share, and that the non-residential share of taxes be decreased from 53 per cent to 48 per cent, with this change phased in over a number of years. This shift would mean a tax increase for residential taxpayers. How do you feel about how taxes are divided between residential and commercial taxpayers? Are you willing to pay more taxes on your home to reduce the burden on businesses? As a commercial taxpayer, how would a tax reduction impact your business?

Learn more about the Tax Commission's work and final report, visit: **vancouver.ca/taxcommission** ◆

GREEN CITY

VANCOUVER HAS ALWAYS been a green city in terms of the trees and foliage that highlight our surroundings. But now we've been recognized for our environmental leadership too.

Vancouver was named B.C.'s greenest city with a population of 100,000 or more, by the provincial government's Green City Awards program. The City of Vancouver received the Green City Award for the quality of our planning and programs, which result in a livable and more sustainable city. The award also acknowledged efforts to reduce our ecological footprint through programs such as: One Day, which encourages individuals to take small steps to reduce energy use (**onedayvancouver.ca**), the Green Streets and Country Lanes programs; sustainable street design; the City's requirement that all new civic facilities achieve a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold rating; and our social sustainability planning. The award was accompanied by a $200,000 prize that will be applied to ongoing and new sustainability programs at the City.

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR GREENHOUSE GAS FOOTPRINT

A family of four can reduce their footprint by one tonne by:

- buying or leasing a smaller, more fuel-efficient car
- choosing from the five energy-efficient washing machines and a low-flow kitchen aerator (it'll pay itself off in energy costs in just over a year)

A family of two can reduce their footprint by one tonne by:

- choosing and exercising two greener modes of transportation (walking, biking, transit, carpooling) for a total of 10 hours per week
- growing without fertilizer or pesticides 10 square metres of vegetables, fruit or herbs in the city and under 1.5 square metres in the country
- replacing their hot water tank (even from low- to medium-efficiency) with a high-efficiency model

A person living alone can reduce their footprint by half a tonne by:

- walking to nearby stores rather than taking the car two times per week
- turning off the pilot light in the fireplace for four months in the summer

Learn about other ways to make a difference. Visit **onedayvancouver.ca** and sign up for energy-saving action reminders and the monthly newsletter.

SNOW SEASON

When the snow hits the sidewalks this winter, don't forget to do your part to help keep our streets cleared and safe.

Vancouver property owners are responsible for clearing snow and ice from the sidewalks that surround their property by 10 a.m. the morning after a snowfall.

The City's snow removal bylaw applies to all property owners in the city EXCEPT one- and two-family residences outside the downtown peninsula.

Owners who don't remove snow and ice as required by the bylaw may be subject to a fine of up to $2,000, or the City can have the snow removed and bill the owner for the cost.

Please also try to help clear the sidewalks for those who can't. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

For more information: **vancouver.ca/snow**

REBIRTH OF A CEMETERY

A new era is beginning at Mountain View Cemetery, the cemetery owned and operated by the City of Vancouver since 1887.

Located west of Fraser Street between 31st and 43rd Avenues, Mountain View is made up of 43 hectares of land and is currently home to approximately 92,000 grave sites and 145,000 interred remains. The cemetery has not sold space since 1986.

In 2000, City staff and consultants developed a Master Plan, with a goal to reopen and revitalize this historic space. For the past few years, extensive planning and design has been going on at the cemetery, and some of the first major pieces of the Master Plan are taking shape. A new operations yard was completed in July 2007. An administration and customer service building is scheduled to open in January 2008, and the Celebration Room (a place for families to hold memorial services on site) is expected to open in April 2008.

This redesign and development process also includes the creation of more than 2,200 new spaces for cremated remains. Sale of the new spaces is scheduled to begin February 2008.

This development will let Mountain View Cemetery offer Vancouverites new interment and memorialization options within the city for the first time in more than 20 years. These updates will also help reduce the operational cost of the cemetery on the tax roll.

Anyone interested in the new spaces may join the notification list by calling the cemetery office at **604.325.2646** or e-mailing **mountainview.cemetery@vancouver.ca**. For updates and information visit the website: **vancouver.ca/cemetery**

ON TARGET

THIS FALL, VANCOUVER released its 2007 Climate Protection Progress Report, and the news was good. Despite our growing population, Vancouver's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions peaked around 2001 and have declined significantly since then.

City-wide GHG emissions have dropped to only five per cent over 1990 levels, and the City of Vancouver's GHGs from civic operations have fallen to five per cent below 1990 levels.

In comparison, national emissions are up 25 per cent and provincial emissions are up 30 per cent since 1990. Vancouver's GHG emissions per person are the lowest of the North American cities it was compared with, including Toronto, Calgary, Seattle and Portland.

Since the City of Vancouver approved a recommendation in 1990 to reduce CO_2 emissions as part of a global climate change initiative, Vancouver has become a leader in limiting and reducing GHG. The City's success has stemmed from good planning and policies. Our urban planning has encouraged mixed-use land development and directs higher densities to neighbourhoods with jobs and services, meaning citizens don't depend on their cars as much to get around. The Vancouver Transportation Plan, implemented in 1997, made pedestrian, cycling and transit improvements a priority. Vancouver became the first city in Canada to regulate building energy efficiency in 2001, and the City is currently pursuing a Green Building Strategy for all new buildings.

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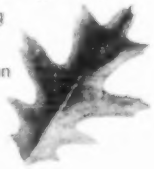
As an organization, the City of Vancouver is also leading by example. The award-winning Landfill Gas Recovery system collects gas emissions from the landfill and uses them to generate heat and power. This has reduced Vancouver's annual GHG emissions by nearly 200,000 tonnes, and produces enough clean energy annually to power the equivalent of 6,000 homes. Energy retrofits in civic buildings and constructing all new and replacement facilities to meet high environmental standards are also helping cut down on GHGs.

While we have achieved significant successes, we need to keep developing new ideas and working with other levels of government and local businesses to achieve our GHG reduction targets and keep our city green. In addition, everyday choices made by individuals will play a major role in our success. Every time you walk or bike instead of drive, or incorporate energy savings into your home, you're reducing GHG emissions.

To read the Climate Protection Progress Report visit: **vancouver.ca/sustainability** ◆



BAYSHORE GARDENS CHILDREN'S CENTRE

The newest City-owned child care centre in Vancouver celebrated its official grand opening in September.

The Bayshore Gardens Children's Centre, located in the Bayshore Gardens residential towers in Coal Harbour, is a 49-space licensed child care facility operated by the Vancouver Society of Children's Centres. The program provides 12 infant, 12 toddler and 25 much-needed spaces for three to five year olds in Vancouver. This new facility includes 5,200 square feet of indoor space, and 5,000 square feet of outdoor play space. The centre was built and furnished by the site owner as a condition of rezoning the Bayshore Lands for residential development, as set out in the City of Vancouver's Civic Child Care Strategy.

The strategy addresses the need to facilitate the development of child care facilities in conjunction with new developments in high-density neighbourhoods.

Since 1990, Vancouver City Councils have recognized that while the provincial government is mandated to deliver child care, the City has opportunities to aid in the creation of child care facilities in new developments. Child care facilities and programs are a key focus for the City's Child Development Design Team, made up of Social Planning, Facility Design and Management, Real Estate and Legal staff, who work with private developers and non-profit child care operators to address the growing demand for affordable, quality child care facilities in Vancouver. Learn more: **vancouver.ca/childcare**

HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Affordable housing and homelessness are among Vancouver's most urgent and complicated challenges. This fall, the Province of B.C. and the City of Vancouver developed an innovative proposal to expedite the approval of up to 1,200 new social and supportive housing units for low-income singles on 12 City-owned sites.

The City will lease the 12 sites to the Province, and the Province will pay for all pre-development costs. The social and supportive housing will be exempt from property taxes. The Province will issue a proposal calling for non-profit societies to manage and operate the housing developments. This partnership initiative builds on the City's existing housing policies, and also supports Project Civil City's goal to reduce homelessness by 50 per cent by 2010 and to increase housing opportunities. Project-specific open houses will be held in early 2008 to give the public a chance to review plans and offer feedback.

For more information: **vancouver.ca/housing**

ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME CELEBRATIONS

Community celebrations will be a fun, festive way for everyone to enjoy the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games beyond the sports venues.

During the Games, everyone will be able to enjoy free entertainment, dynamic sights and sounds, and have opportunities to mingle with visitors from around the world at two vibrant "live sites" downtown.

Olympic-related community celebrations will animate neighbourhoods across the city before, during and after the 2010 Winter Games. These will be inclusive events, activities and legacy projects planned and created by groups, individuals or organizations. Some may be one-of-a-kind experiences.

Other celebrations may also consist of 2010-related themes and programming added to existing events, or be long-term commemorations of Vancouver's Olympic experience.

Each will reflect in some way Vancouver's once-in-a-lifetime Host City experience. How do you want to celebrate? Council wants to hear your thoughts and ideas on community celebrations. Everyone is welcome to fill out the Celebration Survey at **vancouver.ca/olympics**

Printed copies of the Celebration Survey are also available at City Hall, community centres and libraries. A call for community event proposals is also posted on **vancouver.ca/olympics** and selected submissions may be eligible for funding and support. ◆

THE STANLEY PARK STORM – ONE YEAR LATER

It's been almost a year since the massive windstorm that knocked down more than 10,000 trees in Stanley Park and closed the Seawall. Since then, the Vancouver Park Board has made considerable progress in its plan to clean up and restore the park, thanks in large part to the support of all three levels of government and the generous contributions of many corporate and private donors.

With the help of biologists, archaeologists, engineers, environmentalists and forest specialists, staff have assessed and mapped the park; cleared many of the blown-down areas; removed hazardous trees weakened by the winds; completed most of the tree-thinning work that will help protect the forest from future storms; and stabilized the damaged cliffs above the Seawall.

Some of the fallen trees are being left to meet the ecological needs of the forest and provide animal and bird habitats. Some of the timber is also earmarked for Park Board projects, Olympic-related facilities and artistic and cultural purposes, including First Nations projects. Much of the low-value timber is being sold to fund future restoration efforts in the park. The renewal of the park's forest will be hastened by the 16,000 donated seedlings that are being grown especially for planting in the park this fall and early next year. Learn more about the restoration progress: **vancouverparks.ca** ◆

CEPERLEY PLAYGROUND HOME TO AIR INDIA MEMORIAL

Stanley Park's iconic red fire engine, anchoring the popular Ceperley Playground near Second Beach, shines brightly in a new landscape, refurbished as part of the new Air India Memorial. The Air India Memorial was officially unveiled on July 27, 2007 with a special dedication ceremony that included family members and friends of the victims.

State-of-the-art play equipment, along with swings, slides and creatively designed climbing ropes, flank a newly upgraded area for summer dancing and traffic school. Just to the west of the play area is a place of quiet contemplation where a curving stone wall is etched with 331 names commemorating the bombing victims who perished on Air India Flight 182 and at Narita Airport in 1985 in the worst terrorist incident in Canadian history. Eighty-two of the victims were children, and the new playground symbolizes their innocence, and offers a place for happiness and enjoyment to the children of today and the future.

The memorial wall's wing shape represents the plane's path while the surrounding plaza stones symbolize all those lost. Dove trees with white handkerchief blossoms, which are emblematic of peace, hug classic granite walls blending in with the original picnic shelter.

The cost of the project was shared by the governments of Canada and British Columbia, and is built on land provided by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. The planning process involved consultations with the general public and the victims' families.

IN TOUCH WITH THE CITY

vancouver.ca/intouch.html

MULTILINGUAL PHONE LINES

For more information about the City in these languages, call:

資料查詢 604.871.6868	ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਵੋ 604.871.6565
Hỏi chi tiết 604.871.6969	**Obtenga Información** 604.871.6464

CITYNEWS

CITYNEWS is published twice a year with tax notices by the City's Corporate Communications Division at 604.873.7276 to update Vancouver residents on the many programs and services provided by the City. These services include: police, fire and rescue, libraries, parks and community centres, planning and land use, theatres, archives, garbage collection and recycling, water and sewer service, and transportation.

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